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City of Newport

MAKE IT YOUR HOME TOO



2005 BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT

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BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

The City of Newport values its business community and recognizes the crucial role that local establishments play in the vitality of the area. Recently the City restructured its economic development efforts to place more emphasis on existing business retention and expansion. As part of that effort over six hundred surveys were sent out to local businesses in January. The purpose of the survey is to collect primary data directly from local businesses to better understand their experiences in the current business climate/environment and ascertain the needs of the business community looking forward.

At the time of drafting this report almost one hundred surveys were returned resulting in a 16% response rate. Important findings regarding the pool of respondents and the businesses that they represent are as follows:

- 62% of the surveys were completed by business owners,
- 60% have been in the community for over ten years,
- 60% own their facility,
- 48% report Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky as their primary market,
- 37% are family owned, and
- 23% live in Newport.

The survey results are overwhelmingly positive and are a tribute to the progress achieved by the residents, businesses, and City administration of Newport. Approximately 90% reported that they would recommend other businesses locate in the City, almost 72% rated the community an excellent or good place to do business; and 52% felt Newport had an excellent or good quality of life. Businesses cited the following as the top five reasons for operating in Newport:

- Geographic location
- Proximity to customers
- Proximity to suppliers
- Safe environment, and
- Business services.

A significant portion of respondents also wrote in additional reasons for operating in Newport other than the options provided. Additionally, businesses ranked Newport above average in nineteen of twenty-three categories examined. The top three ranked categories were fire service, police service, and restaurants. The four categories rated below average are street repairs; snow and ice removal; hotel facilities; and conference facilities. See **Table 1** for complete rankings.

Over one-third of the respondents reported having plans to modernize, renovate, or expand their present building(s) and/or equipment. A majority of businesses also reported that they expected growth over the next three years in the following areas:

- Customer base,
- Sales/total revenues, and
- Profits.

Over half of the businesses surveyed felt that their total employment would remain stable over the next three years.

The survey provided businesses the opportunity to rate the cost of doing business in Newport. Nine areas were addressed by the survey:

- Building costs (rent),

- Environmental regulations,
- Health insurance costs,
- Inventory taxes,
- Corporate taxes,
- Payroll taxes,
- Property Taxes,
- Utilities, and
- Workers compensation.

The majority of businesses felt that the cost of doing business in Newport related to all nine categories were acceptable; however, seven of the nine categories had a quarter or more of the businesses report that the costs were high (i.e. health insurance, utilities, workers comp). Please see **Table 2** for a complete list of the results.

Businesses were also asked to identify immediate and long-term needs in the community. In respect to immediate needs, 81 responses were recorded, of which 34 were related to roadways, sidewalks, or snow removal. The responses included two-way Monmouth; better signage; more efficient parking management; and beautifying York Street with landscaping and lights similar to the Monmouth streetscape project. Other significant immediate needs include tax relief, continuous improvement on safety issues, and marketing and promoting the whole City.

Twenty-three responses were given for long-term needs; parking and street issues again accounted for many of these comments. Redevelopment and adding new businesses and residents also marked high. Please see **Table 3A** and **3B** to view all submitted responses.

The information gathered through this survey will be used internally and collaboratively with outside organizations to address areas of concern and help shape progressive, proactive policies targeted at improving the local business climate and to attract additional establishments to the community.

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

NEWPORT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY AND THEIR SUPPORT OF THIS PROJECT

NEWPORT BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE NEWPORT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

FOR BEING LOCATED IN THE CITY AND PARTICIPATING IN THIS EFFORT

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION –

OHIO BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION INITIATIVE

WHO CREATED THE ORIGINAL SURVEY INSTRUMENT THAT WITH MINOR MODIFICATION WAS USED
IN THIS PROCESS

Table 1: Ranked Categories	Weighted Average Response
Fire protection	3.5
Police protection	3.5
Restaurants	3.2
Health care services (EMS, hospitals, clinics)	2.9
Natural gas services	2.5
Professional services	2.5
Business services	2.3
Public transportation	2.3
Recreation/cultural activities/entertainment	2.3
Electrical services	2.3
Telecom services	2.1
Air service	2.1
High speed Internet access	2.0
Roads, highways and freeways	1.9
Water and sewers	1.6
Child care services	1.6
Shopping	1.4
School system	1.3
Street and sidewalk cleaning	1.1
Street repairs	0.7
Snow and ice removal	0.6
Hotel facilities	0.2
Conference facilities	-0.1
Scale	
5 = Excellent 3 = Good 1 = Average -3 = Poor -5 = Very Poor	

Table 2: Business Costs	High	Acceptable	Low
Building costs (rent)	17%	74%	9%
Environmental regulations	6%	88%	6%
Health insurance costs	42%	53%	5%
Inventory taxes	37%	60%	4%
Corporate taxes	39%	58%	3%
Payroll taxes	43%	51%	6%
Property taxes	36%	60%	4%
Utilities	33%	66%	1%
Workers compensation	35%	64%	1%

Table 3A - Immediate Business Needs and Concerns

2-way Monmouth	Parking - need more parking
2-way Monmouth	Parking - promote free parking lots
Attraction - bring major anchor to Levee	Parking - unfair to put loading zone in front of an empty business
Attraction - monetary assistance for start ups	Property - availability of retail space for sale
Attraction - more "elite" businesses	Property - beautification of whole city
Attraction - more upscale shopping at the levee	Property - continue to keep city clean
Attraction - need a hotel at the levee	Property - empty storefronts/offices are not kept in good order
Attraction - new businesses on Monmouth	Property - need larger space but can't find one
Attraction - tenant for Carnegie	Property - need to find new location
City - code enforcement	Property - subsidized housing/vacant bldgs lead to crime/filth
City - met with city officials have not heard back in some time	Safety
City - work with, not against businesses to make money	Safety - continued
City - zoning laws prohibit small business growth	Safety - for employees
Expenses – health insurance	Safety - more police presence
Expenses - utility costs	Safety - need better police protection
Marketing	Sidewalk - need cleaned
Marketing - another investor's fair	Sidewalk - outside sales like other cities
Marketing - available properties	Sidewalks - install on both sides of the road from Levee to I-471
Marketing - continued marketing of the area as a whole	Sidewalks - not clean
Marketing - greater exposure to businesses not on Monmouth	Signs - businesses on York
Marketing – more advertising of area	Signs - good readable street signs
Marketing - move events from riverfront back to Monmouth/CBD	Snow removal - emergency plan to assist public works
Marketing - promote downtown with events	Snow removal - upgrades
Marketing - promote downtown with events	Snow removal - upgrades
Marketing - promoting downtown	Street - repair
Misc - assistance in obtaining EPA clearance	Street - repair Lowell Street
Misc - garbage facilities not good on north section of York	Street - rush hour traffic on Route 8
Misc - liquor sales on Sunday	Street - trees replanted
Misc – loitering	Street - York beautification, trees, sidewalk, lights
Misc - sell package liquor on sun	Streets - conditions are horrendous
Parking	Streets - improve infrastructure
Parking	Streets - improve/add turn lanes at shopping center
Parking	Streets - need better repair
Parking	Taxes
Parking	Taxes - are a real problem
Parking – daytime/lunch free parking	Taxes - high payroll taxes
Parking - eliminate employees paying for parking	Taxes - high payroll taxes
Parking - management on Monmouth	Taxes - keep local cost down/reduce taxes
Parking - more public parking	Taxes - lower city taxes
Parking - more public parking on Monmouth	Taxes - too high
Parking - need loading zone in front of store	

Table 3B - Long-term Business Needs and Concerns

Attraction - continued development of the levee area	Parking - additional parking
Attraction - customer base growth	Parking - weekend big parking place
Attraction - grocery reopened - area developed	Property - building infrastructure upgrades
Attraction - growth around shopping center	Property - expansion room for new building
Attraction - new businesses	Property - modernization of older structures
Attraction - old library reused	Property - move to better local
Attraction - old library reused	Street - signs for levee/aquarium at all 3 Newport exits
Attraction - old Thriftway	Street - traffic flow in growing areas
City - comp plan to bring life back to Monmouth w/shops, food, recreation and entertainment	Taxes
City - GIS system	Taxes - loss of the enterprise zone
Misc - longer operating hours (bar)	Taxes - lower taxes
Parking	